

I CLAIM

1. A valve arrangement adapted to be fitted to a container at least partially filled with a liquid, for
5 dispensing the liquid from the container to a mouth of an animal on demand of the animal, the valve arrangement comprising a first tube portion adapted to pierce a portion of the container to receive the liquid from the container, a second tube portion provided with an end
10 adapted to be used by the animal, and a valve means adapted to be actuated by the animal to permit the flow of the liquid from the container to the end of the second tube portion.

15 2. The valve arrangement of claim 1, wherein the first tube portion has an end thereof shaped to form at least one sharply angled region, which sharply angled region facilitates piercing of the portion of the container by the first tube portion.

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3. The valve arrangement of claim 1, wherein the first and second tube portions of the valve arrangement are formed as an integral unit.

4. The valve arrangement of claim 1, wherein the first and second portions of the valve arrangement are formed separately and assembled together.

5 5. The valve arrangement of claim 4, wherein the first and second portions of the valve arrangement are assembled together by threaded engagement.

6. The valve arrangement of claim 1, wherein the valve
10 arrangement is adapted to be secured to a structure associated with the animal by means selected from a clip, a ferrule, a threaded cap, a grommet, a washer, a bracket and a cradle.

15 7. The valve arrangement of claim 1, wherein the valve means comprises a pin having a head portion engaging an apertured seal, and a spring applying force to maintain engagement of the head portion of the spring with the apertured seal, the pin having an end extending from the
20 second tube portion of the valve means and adapted to be contacted by the animal to raise the head portion from the seal against force of the spring to permit flow of the liquid through the valve arrangement from the container.

8. The valve arrangement of claim 1, wherein the valve means comprises a non-return valve actuated by the animal and adapted to permit flow of the liquid through the valve arrangement from the container towards the animal
5 but to prevent any flow of the liquid from the animal to the container.

9. An assembly for dispensing a liquid from a container to a mouth of an animal, on demand of the animal, the
10 assembly comprising a sealed container at least partially filled with the liquid and a valve arrangement fitted thereto, the valve arrangement comprising a first tube portion piercing a portion of the container to receive the liquid from the container, a second tube portion
15 provided with an end adapted to be used by the animal, and a valve means adapted to be actuated by the animal to permit the flow of the liquid from the container to the end of the second tube portion.

20 10. The assembly of claim 9, wherein the container is of rigid form comprising a filtered vent to relieve a vacuum created within the container as the liquid is dispensed therefrom to the animal.

25 11. The assembly of claim 10, wherein the filtered vent comprises a Hepa filter.

12. The assembly of claim 9, wherein the container is arranged to collapse under atmospheric pressure as the liquid is dispensed therefrom to the animal.

5 13. The assembly of claim 12, wherein the container comprises a rigid material provided with a pleated surface.

14. The assembly of claim 12, wherein the container is
10 of bag-form comprising a flexible material.

15. The assembly of claim 9, wherein container comprises a material selected from a plastics material, rubber, treated paper and cardboard, cloth and fibre materials.

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16. The assembly of claim 9, wherein the container is hermetically sealed.

17. The assembly of claim 9, wherein the container is
20 provided within an outer wrapping to maintain sterility of the container prior to use.

18. The assembly of claim 9, wherein the container comprises a material selected so as to be capable of
25 being sterilised.

19. The assembly of claim 9, wherein the container is provided with means for suspending it from suitable support means.

5 20. The assembly of claim 9, wherein the portion of the container pierced by the first tube portion of the valve arrangement is arranged to be pierced without leakage of the liquid occurring between the portion of the container and an exterior of the first tube portion, the first tube
10 portion forming a water-tight fit in the pierced portion of the container.

21. The assembly of claim 9, wherein the portion of the container pierced by the first tube portion of the valve
15 is a seal means.

22. The assembly of claim 21, wherein the container is provided with a connecting tube extending therefrom and wherein the seal means comprises a membrane provided in
20 the connecting tube.

23. The assembly of claim 21, wherein the seal means is covered by a removable cap until access thereto for piercing is required.

24. The assembly of claim 9, wherein the valve arrangement is arranged to be fitted to the container and the container arranged to be secured to the structure.